



A FUNERAL
SERMON

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

OF

Mr. *THOMAS HOLLIS.*

Preach'd SEPTEMBER 14. 1718.

By JEREMIAH HUNT. *K*

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TO THE
DESCENDANTS
OF
Mr. *THOMAS HOLLIS*,
DECEASED.

THE many Civilities I have receiv'd from your Family, and the near Relation you stand in to the Person deceas'd, induce me to dedicate this Discourse to You.

The Character I have given of him, you are sensible, is exactly just; tho' it may by some be esteem'd blameable for its Shortness. I doubt not but you regard it your Honour and Happiness to descend from One so *Religious* and *Virtuous*, and return
your

DEDICATION.

your unfeigned Thanks to God for the pious Instructions you receiv'd from him, and the Success which, by the Blessing of God, attended 'em. That this is an Encouragement to You, who are favour'd with an Offspring to continue your Care in training them up in the Fear of the LORD, I need not tell you.

I must not acquaint the World, how much you imitate your Father's Goodness. That you may go on, and even outstrip your Honour'd Father, in all the Fruits of the Blessed Spirit, and arrive late to the Eternal Happiness he has already reach'd, is the ardent Prayer of

Your Sincere Friend, and

Humble Servant,



JER. HUNT.

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OF

Mr. *Thomas Hollis.*



PHILIP. I. 21.

*For me to live is Christ, and to die
is Gain.*

AT the Time when the Apostle wrote this Letter, he was under Confinement for the sake of Christ. This appears, *ver. 7. Because I have you in my Heart, inasmuch as in my Bonds, and in the Defence and Confirmation of the Gospel, you all are Partakers of my Grace. Ver. 12. So that my Bonds in (or for the Cause of) Christ, are manifest in the Pa-*
B *late,*

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lace, and in all other Places. Ver. 14. *And many of the Brethren of the Lord waxing confident by my Bonds.*

That he had been under this Restraint some considerable Time before this Epistle was sent, may fairly be collected, partly from the Circumstances of the fore-mention'd Texts ; partly from the *Philippians* sending *Epaphroditus* to him with Relief, and his Return to them with this Epistle, after a dangerous Sickness, and from his Ch. ii. 24. *Hopes to come quickly to them.*

While the Apostle was thus confin'd and in Bonds for the sake of Christ, some, who were disaffected to him, preach'd Christ even of Envy and Strife, recommending probably with the Doctrine of Christianity, a high Esteem of the Ceremonies of the Law, which the Apostle was supposed to be so violent an Opposer of, with an Intention to add Affliction to his Bonds. But that Temper of Mind which he expressed on this unhappy Occasion, was truly great Ver. 18. and noble. *What then? shall this afflict me? No; since notwithstanding every way, whether in Pretence or in Truth, Christ is still preach'd, and I therein rejoice, yea, and will rejoice: for I know that this shall be so far from accomplishing their End of adding Tribulation to my Bonds, that it shall turn to my Salvation (i. e.) my Deliverance, thro' your Prayers for me, and the Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, enabling me to plead so as shall tend to my Enlargement; according to my Expectation and Hope, that, through the Assistance*

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ance of the Spirit of Courage, which God hath promis'd and given to us, *in nothing I shall be asham'd ; but that with all Boldness, as always hitherto, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my Body, whether it be by Life or by Death: For to me to live is Christ, and to dye is Gain.*

In discoursing on these Words, I shall observe the following Method.

I. *To explain what the Apostle means by the Phrase, To me to live is Christ.*

II. *To shew what he intends by the Expression in the latter Clause of the Text, To dye is Gain.*

III. *The Suitableness of these Words to the present melancholy Occasion, viz. The Decease of an ancient Member of this Church, whose Request is the Ground of my fixing upon them.*

IV. *To make proper Application.*

I. To explain what the Apostle means by the Phrase, *viz. To me to live is Christ.*

Upon a slight View of the Words, it appears evident, that they have a peculiar Reference to the Apostle, and of consequence must have a particular Interpretation put upon them. They are brought in as a Reason and Argument to make out and evince the solid Ground of that earnest Expectation and Hope he had mention'd in the pre-

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ceding Verse, That *Christ should be magnified in his Body, whether it be by Life or by Death*; and the Sense of them may be given in this Paraphrase: ' I am at present depriv'd of Liberty, thro' the Malice of those who are Enemies to the Christian Religion: It is as well my earnest Desire, as considerate Expectation, that whatever Event befalls me, the Interest of Christ, and the Furtherance of the Gospel, may be the Result. My Bonds in Christ are already known and discours'd of at Court, and in all other Places, and many will be put upon examining the Grounds of that Religion, which I am willing to suffer for, with such Chearfulness and Resolution. Others who have receiv'd this Doctrine, will have new Life given to their Resolution by the Firmness of Mind and Stedfastness of Faith, that I am enabled to express, and be the more embolden'd to preach the Gospel without Fear or Trepidity. True it is, there is an ill Spirit in some who malign me, and preach Christ from Contention; but the View that Christ is preach'd, and his Honour advanc'd, gives me a sensible Pleasure, tho' the Motive in them is less honourable. I conceive some Hopes, that thro' your Prayers for me, and the Spirit's assisting me to plead for my Liberty, I shall be deliver'd from my present Confinement; but whether my Enlargement, and consequently, the Continuance of my Life, or (thro' the last Effort of Rage in the Enemies of Christianity) my suffering Death

‘ Death for the sake of Christ, should arise
‘ in the Course of Divine Providence ; I
‘ have not the least Colour of Reason to
‘ doubt, but that Christ will be magnify’d
‘ in my Body, which way soever it turns,
‘ whether in Life or Death: *For to me to live*
‘ *is Christ.* If I am set at Liberty, and am
‘ preserv’d, I have no other Concern in Life,
‘ than to promote the Interest of Christ.
‘ The Advancement of his Kingdom shall
‘ be my great Scope, to which I will refer
‘ all my Actions, and for which I will
‘ spend my Strength, and exert all my
‘ Powers. *For to me to live is Christ.*

As the primary Sense of the Words have something Peculiar, in respect to the Apostle, implying an eminent Devotedness of Life to the Service and Honour of Christ; so the Grounds on which this his Conduct may be made appear reasonable, and fully vindicated to the considerate Part of Mankind; are, in several Circumstances, very Particular and Engaging.

When he went towards *Damascus*, breathing out Death and Ruin against the Disciples of the Lord, in a miraculous manner, the Glory shining around him, and a Voice coming from Heaven, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* he was converted to the Faith he before sought to destroy. He could not doubt but that *He* was the Son of God and the Messiah who spoke to him, from the *excellent Glory*; a Glory so overbearing, as to deprive him of his Sight: and his Faith was more strength.

strengthen'd by the Cure of his Blindness, thro' the Means of *Ananias*, the very Person of whom he had been before favour'd with a Sight, by a Vision from Heaven. Thus fully convinc'd, he straightway preach'd Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the *Son of God*: The Character he was to sustain is represented in *Acts ix. 15.* *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen Vessel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Chosen of Israel, for I will shew him how great Things he must suffer for my Name sake.* He therefore tells Gal. i. 1. us, He was an *Apostle not of Men, neither by Man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who rais'd him up from the Dead.*

As he was thus dignify'd, and call'd to so Particular and Eminent an Office, he was furnish'd with answerable Extraordinary Gifts of Miracles, whereby he was enabled to come with Power and Demonstration of the Spirit. Moreover,

It appears, That the Views he had of the admirable Skill which shone in the surprising Plan of our Recovery by the Word *Incaruate*, were peculiarly clear, and remarkably large. Upon the whole, it is no wonder then, that a Person converted to the Christian Religion in so extraordinary a manner; call'd to so high a Dignity, as to be an *Apostle of Jesus Christ*; attended with such a Degree of Divine Power, as, when proper, to be enabled to work Miracles to confirm the Authority of his Doctrine; favour'd with Sights of *his Glory* who is the Foun-

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Founder of this Institution, and with clear and distinct Views of the Excellency of all the Parts of this Religion ; his Mind fully convinc'd, and ravish'd with the most pleasing Prospects ; it is no wonder, I say, that such an One should express an eminent Zeal for promoting the Honour of Christ : Is it not highly reasonable, such a Person, being signally devoted to the Service of Christ, should be able to say, *For me to live is Christ?* (i. e.) I have no other Interest in Life, than what is twisted with the Concerns of Christianity.

But tho' this is the Peculiar Sense of the Words, as they regard the Apostle, yet they are capable of a Meaning which may be apply'd to every sincere Christian ; and in representing this, I shall speak briefly to the following Things.

1. Shew, What is signify'd by *living to Christ*, as it is obligatory upon every one who makes a sincere Profession of the Christian Religion.
 2. Set before you, In what Instances we are to express living to Christ.
 3. Evince, The Reasonableness of it.
1. What is signify'd by [*To me to live is Christ*], as the Words are capable of being apply'd to every Christian.

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It denotes, upon a previous Persuasion arising from proper Reasons, That Jesus is the Son of God, and the true Messias, and that the Doctrine he taught was from Heaven ; a fix'd Resolution to make the Service of Christ, and the Honour of his Religion, the main Scope and great Design of our Conduct : it signifies in the general, as the Rom. xii. Apostle expresses it, *A presenting our selves to*
 1, 2. *God in Christ a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable, thereby performing a reasonable Service ; purposing not to be conform'd to this World, but to be transform'd in the renewing of our Mind (or Judgment of Things), to approve what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect Will of God ; an active and persevering Devotedness to Christ. This will be set in a fuller Light, by*

2. Considering the particular Ways by which this is to be expressed.

§. 1. In a publick and open *Profession* of the Religion of Christ, whatever Difficulties and Hazards such a Profession may render us expos'd to. The Obligation to this arises from a Conviction the Mind has that Jesus was the *Sent* of the Father, and his Doctrine truly Divine, after a due Examination of the Evidence which is offer'd for it ; and the plain and express Declarations which are made in the Writings which transmit this Doctrine to us, of the Necessity of acknowledging Christ and his Religion, in a visible and publick manner :

ner: He that loveth Father or Mother more Mat. x. 37. than me, is not worthy of me; or he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his Cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his Life shall lose it; and he that loseth his Life for my sake shall find it. Whosoever Ver. 32, therefore shall confess me before Men, him will I 33. confess also before my Father which is in Heaven: But whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.

Besides, the Author of the Christian Religion is represented in the Character of Lord, and his Doctrine under the Notion of a Kingdom, and a Kingdom of Light, in opposition to the Kingdom of Darkness; the Destruction whereof was the Intention of his Appearance. And can a Person then, with any tolerable Reason, say, [*To me to live is Christ*] unless he owns his Fealty, and visibly professes Subjection to him; unless he takes part with his Interest, and sides with those who unfeignedly receive him as their rightful Lord.

§. 2. Living to Christ is to be express'd by a sincere and constant Regard to the Precepts he recommends to our Observance in his Religion.

To live to Christ, pre-supposes, That we believe he is the Anointed of the Father, sanctify'd and sent into the World by him to declare his Laws, and reveal his

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Will to us: And can this be sincerely done by us without a steady Regard to the Measures of Conduct he has laid down and prescribed to us.

To live to Christ in the general, implies, That we devote our selves to his Service, and resolve to promote his Honour; and can this be perform'd without a due Deference to his Precepts, making them the constant Rules to direct our Thoughts, and regulate our Behaviour to God, and Others, and Ourselves? This must be readily own'd, unless we will say, we are devoted to Christ, while we trample on his Authority, and are promoting his Service; while we infringe his Laws, and are regardless of his Commands.

John xv.
8.

We are said to glorify the Father, by bringing forth Plenty of the pleasing and beneficial Fruits of Holiness; and it is by the same way we are to bring a Revenue of Honour to our Saviour; for our Lord adds, *So shall ye be my Disciples*. In a Word, If we live to Christ, we shall have a care to please him, by a sincere Respect to *all* his Precepts, sensible, that the Authority which enjoins one, recommends the other: and we shall be solicitous to be constant and persevering in our Obedience.

§. 3. Living to Christ is to be expressed by a careful Imitation of the Graces and Virtues which appear'd conspicuous in his perfect and unspotted Example.

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He appear'd as the Light to guide us on in the Path of Happiness, as well by his bright Pattern, as his excellent Institution. And if we are devoted to him, we shall, as the Apostle directs, look unto him *the* Heb. xii. *Author and Finisher of our Faith.* In the 11th Chapter, to strengthen the Faith of the Hebrew Christians, and influence them to Constancy, tho' they should be call'd to undergo great Sufferings for the sake of the Christian Religion; he sets before them a Catalogue of noble Heroes, *who, through Faith, subdu'd Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, stopt the Mouths of Lions, quench'd the Violence of Fire, &c.* And in the 12th Chapter, *Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset or entangle us, and let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us.* And to conclude with the most finish'd and complete Pattern, he brings Christ to view, and exhorts them to look to him as the *Author, or Leader, and Finisher, or Rewarder of the Faith, i. e. the Christian Race, who for the Joy which was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame.* Christ is our Captain and Leader, and bids us follow him, *for he is meek and lowly in Heart:* And can we be said to live to him, and be concern'd to promote his Honour, unless we tread in his Steps, when Peter tells us, *That Christ also suffered for us,* 1 Pet. ii. *leaving us an Example that we should follow his* 21. *Steps?* In this Sense we may understand

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Rom. xiii. 14. Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, by an Imitation of him. In a Word, our great Apostle, who says, For me to live is Christ, not only represents to others, Christ as an Exemplar, to whose Death and Resurrection he would persuade them to be conform'd by a perpetual Death to Sin, and by being made for ever alive to God; but does himself, in an eminent and peculiar manner, express an ardent Desire

Phil. iii. 10. and steady Endeavour to know Christ, and the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Sufferings, being made conformable to his Death, if by any means he might attain to the Resurrection of the Dead.

§. 4. and *Lastly*, If we live to Christ, we shall express it, by having proper and suitable Affections excited in us, as the Kingdom of Christ is attended with Success, or the Reverse. The sincere Follower of our blessed Lord, is extremely desirous, that the Interest which is directly opposite to the Kingdom of the Messias, and which is styled in Scripture, The Kingdom of Darkness, might be lessen'd, and the Power of it remarkably diminish'd in the World. He is careful in his own Conduct to do nothing which shall reflect Dishonour on that excellent Religion he makes Profession of; and if thro' the Strength of Temptation, he is unhappily betray'd into any Practice, which is attended with such a Consequence, he feels Regret and Uneasiness, and expresses in his future Deportment
greater

greater Circumspection. When the Reputation of the Christian Religion is any way attack'd, and a fair Opportunity is offer'd, to assert and vindicate the Excellency of it; he readily falls in, and according to his Ability, in the Spirit of Meekness, which the Doctrine of Christ recommends; attempts to make others entertain the same high Esteem and Veneration for Christ and his Institution, which he himself receives; and if he succeeds, he finds a sensible Pleasure springing up in his Mind, and as sensible a Grief, if he does not. This appears to be remarkably the Temper of the Apostle Paul: *I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your Faith is spoken of throughout the World. I thank my God always on your Behalf, for the Grace of God, which is given you in or by Jesus Christ, that in every thing you are enriched by him in all Utterance, and in all Knowledge. I thank my God upon every Remembrance of you, always in every Prayer of mine for you all, making Request with Joy for your Fellowship in the Gospel, from the first Day even till now. By which, and many other Passages, it appears, the Apostle Paul had suitable Affections raised in him, as the Religion of his Lord took place in the World, and the contrary. I proceed now to the Third Thing.*

3. To evince the Reasonableness of the Duty of living to Christ; or (in other Words) That to promote the Honour of Christ, and the Religion he has establish'd

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(as far as lies in the Compass of our Power) is what is highly reasonable, and becoming every one who professes Christianity. And this will be made appear undeniably evident, by the following Considerations.

1. If we reflect on the Greatness of the Character which is given of Christ, who is the Founder of the Christian Religion.

2. If we take into our View the Excellency of the Christian Religion, a Zeal for the promoting of which is included in our living to Christ.

3. The full Evidence we have, that Christ had a Divine Mission, and that his Doctrine is from Heaven.

1. It is reasonable every Christian should say, [*To me to live is Christ*] if we consider the Greatness of the Character, which is given of Christ, who is the Founder of the Christian Religion.

He is represented to be the Son of God, his proper only begotten Son, the Brightness of his Glory, and express Image of his Person :
 John i. 1. true and proper God. In the Beginning with
 1 Tim. iii. God, and God. God manifest in Flesh. Thy
 16. Throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; by whom
 Heb. i. 8. all Things were made ; and without whom was
 John i. 5. not any thing made that was made ; and so
 not

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not made or created himself. *All Things* Col. i. 16,
which are in Heaven and Earth, visible and¹⁷
invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions,
or Principalities, or Powers, all Things were
created by him, and for him. He is describ'd
as knowing the Thoughts; present where-ever^{Mat. xii. 5.}
any assemble in his Name. To him all Power^{Mat. xviii.}
is ascrib'd in Heaven and in Earth. What^{20. Rev.}
Things soever He (the Father) doth, these also^{ii. 28.}
doth the Son likewise: for as the Father raiseth^{Mat. 28.}
up the Dead, and quickeneth them, even^{18.}
so the Son quickeneth whom he will; for the
Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all
Judgment unto the Son: for as the Father hath
Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to
have Life in himself: Who is styled, The Holy^{Acts iii.}
One, The Just, The Prince of Life: The Lord^{14, 15. &}
of all: Of whom the whole Family in Heaven^{Acts x. 36.}
and Earth is named. He is before all Things,^{Eph. iii.}
and by him all Things consist. In him dwelleth^{15.}
all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily; the Image^{Col. i. 17.}
of the invisible God; the Heir of all Things,
who is the faithful Witness, the Alpha and
Omega, the First and the Last, the same Yesterday,
to Day, and for Ever; now in Heaven
at the Right Hand of God: Angels, and Au-
thorities, and Powers, being made subject unto
him. To whom all Men are to pay Ho-^{Joh. v. 23.}
nour, even as they honour the Father. — Saying^{& Rev. v.}
with a loud Voice, Worthy is the Lamb that^{12, 13.}
was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and
Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glo-
ry, and Blessing, and every Creature which is
in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the
Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all
that

that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be to him who sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

What can be more reasonable, than to be devoted to his Service, who came from the Bosom of the Father, to teach and instruct us, and has, as God, undoubted Right to our Subjection? What can be more fit than that we should honour him, who is possess'd of Divine Perfections; invested with full Authority (being advanced to the highest Dignity and Glory); to whom Angels, as well as Men, are to render Worship; and who is constituted the great Judge of all? What can be more equitable, than to have the Honour and Interest of so glorious a Lord and Head lye ever near our Hearts? This will farther appear,

2. If we take into our View the Excellency of the Christian Religion; a Zeal for the promoting of which is included in our living to Christ.

The Precepts of the Gospel are in their own Nature reasonable; such as intelligent Beings, in the State and Circumstances we are in, coolly reflecting, would choose to be govern'd by; and the Consequences which attend the Observance of them, are happy to our selves, and beneficial to others. And as the Precepts are proper to perfect our Nature, and render us truly happy;
so

so the Principles of Truth which Christianity lays before the Mind, are really noble and sublime, fitted to exalt the Understanding, and enlarge the Thought, and give the Soul a true Nobility and Greatness. The Ends which the Christian Doctrine proposes, *viz.* The Glory of the Father, and the Honour of the Redeemer, in the Recovery of some of the fallen Race of Man, which would otherwise have been entirely crush'd and ruin'd, to a Participation of the Divine Nature and Holiness, which had been lost by Sin; are truly great, and really worthy of God. The Encouragements which this Religion gives us; the Promise of Pardon and Forgiveness upon a Return to God, thro' the Mediator, on the Account and for the Sake of his Sacrifice; the Expectation of Aids of the Spirit, in proportion to the Tryals we shall be call'd to encounter; and the Hope of an eternal Weight of Glory, which, as a Recompence of Reward, shall be conferr'd on the sincere Votaries of Christ; are strong and powerful Motives, to engage us in Pursuit of Christ's Service and Interest, and render living to him highly reasonable. What other Ends can we have in our View equal to these? The refining our Nature by Divine Knowledge and Purity; the arriving to the Perfection and Holiness which is peculiar to our reasonable Frame; the gaining true Self-Enjoyment and inward Satisfaction; and the Supports of a God in the Difficulties of Life, and Agonies of

D Death,

Death, and at last a Crown of Life, as a Reward, *an Inheritance incorruptible and undefil'd, and that fadeth not away, reserv'd in Heaven?* If these are the blessed Fruits that spring out of our living to Christ (as undoubtedly they are) is it not a Condescension, that it is express'd by the Phrase, *Living to Christ*, when it is, in propriety, living to our own true Glory and proper Happiness?

3dly and *Lastly*, Let us consider the full Evidence we have, that Christ had a Divine Mission, and that his Doctrine was from Heaven.

The Religion of Christ is not a Fable artfully contriv'd, and skilfully conducted; but a Doctrine which is as clearly prov'd to be of a Divine Original, as the Nature of the Thing will bear. For, besides the Agreeableness of it to the best Notions we are capable of forming of God, and the Beauty and Excellency which appears in the several Parts; of which we have already given a short Representation; all the Circumstances of the Birth and Doctrine, Life and Death, and Resurrection of the Author and Founder of it, were particularly mark'd out by Writers, who liv'd many Ages before his Appearance: All which, upon a careful Comparison, will be found to have a most perfect and exact Agreement.

Farther, a little before his coming to declare to us the Will of Heaven, a Messenger

ger was sent to prepare his Way, to whom it was reveal'd, *Upon whom he should see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* And he saw and bare Record, that this John i. 32, *is the Son of God.* Accordingly, when Je- 33, 34. sus came to *John* to be baptiz'd of him, in the View of those who were present, the Heavens open'd, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, hovering as a Dove in the *Shekinah* and Glory, the visible Mark of Divine Presence; and a Voice came, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* When our Saviour was in great Distress, and pray'd, *Father, save me from* John xii. *this Hour: but for this Cause came I unto this* 27, 28. *Hour; Father, glorify thy Name;* the Voice from Heaven is repeated; saying, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again:* And our Lord tells them who were present, *This was not for his, but their sakes.* A like Testimony was given, when our Sa- Ver. 30. viour took with him *Peter, James, and John,* and brought them into a high Mountain, and was transfigur'd before them; and his Face shone as the Sun, and his Rayment was white as the Light; and behold there appeared to them *Moses and Elias talking with him.* Then answered *Peter,* and said unto *Jesus,* Lord, it is good for us to be here. — While he yet spake, behold a bright Cloud over-shadowed them, and behold a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: Hear ye him.* This is the Witness of God, which he hath testify'd of his Son;

1 Joh. v. 9. *and if we receive the Witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater.*

Moreover, That Jesus was the Son of God, and the true Messias, the Variety of Miracles which our Saviour was empower'd to work, clearly attests. They were attended with such Circumstances, as were proper to make appear, that they were real and incontestable Miracles. They were Miracles of Goodness, suitable to the Genius of the Religion they were design'd to confirm. They were wrought in Publick, and in View of those whose Dislike of the Worker, and the Religion he establish'd, would make them look more nicely into, and with greater Care examine their Reality. The Distempers which were cur'd, were inveterate, which had baffled the greatest Skill of Physicians; and some of them were from Infancy, and were cur'd by a Word, and at a Distance; and the Instantaneous Cure was so perfect, that of the Persons recover'd, some arose and ministred, and others took up their Beds, and walk'd. The Variety and Number of these extraordinary Events, give a farther Weight and Strength to the Argument. Besides, he imparted to others the Power of working them, with an Intention to confirm the Doctrine he sent them forth to preach. Our Lord appeals to his

Joh. v. 36. *Miracles: The Works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works which I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Ch. x. 37. *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe*

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me not ; but if I do, tho' ye believe not me, believe the Works ; that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. When Two Disciples of *John*, who were sent by him to enquire of our Lord, Whether he was *He* that should come, or they should direct their View to another ? Our Saviour Luke vii. 20, &c. in the same Hour curing many of their Infirmities, and Plagues, and evil Spirits ; and to many that were blind giving Sight, said, Go your way, and tell *John* what Things you have seen and heard ; how that the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised ; to the Poor the Gospel is preach'd : and blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.

Besides, our Saviour foretels, in a particular manner, the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple : And the History *Josephus* the Jew has compos'd, relates the Fact in such Circumstances, as render the Accomplishment of our Lord's Prediction extremely remarkable. Add to this, that he foretells his own Death, and lays the Truth of his Doctrine upon the Certainty of his Resurrection ; the Reality of which was made evident by a Number of strong and glaring Circumstances ; and when he had shewed himself alive, after his Passion, by many infallible Proofs, being seen of them (his Disciples) forty Days, and speaking of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, in the View of his Apostles, he was taken up, and a Cloud receiv'd him out of their Sight. After which, on the Feast of Pentecost, accord-

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according to his Promise, he pour'd out the Spirit in the extraordinary Gifts of Tongues, Faith, Knowledge, Wisdom, &c. for the Propagation and Establishment of the Christian Religion. And the Apostles, who were Eye and Ear-Witnesses, furnish'd with these extraordinary Powers, and free from ambitious and interested Designs; preach'd a Risen Lord, and were willing to seal the Truth of their Doctrine with their Blood. Thus is Christianity founded; so full and clear is the Proof of it: And shall not we think it reasonable to promote an Institution so well attested to be from God? That comes recommended with such Credentials? Shall not we esteem it fit to live to Christ, who has so many incontestable Marks of a Divine Mission? I come now to the Second General Head.

II. *To set before you what the Apostle intends by the Expression he uses in the latter Clause of the Text, — And to dye is Gain.*

This, as the former, has a Peculiar Meaning, respecting the Apostle, if connected with the foregoing Verse, and with Paul's Desire, That Christ might be magnified in his Body, whether it be by Life or Death; 'for if I am continu'd in Life, I am resolv'd to dedicate it to the Honour of Christ; and if I dye for the Sake of Christianity, it will turn to the Advantage and Interest of the Christian Religion.'

‘ gion : So that whether I live or dye, it
‘ is my earnest Expectation and Hope,
‘ that Christ will be magnify’d in my
‘ Body.

That the Death of the Apostle for the Sake of Christ, would prove Gain to his Interest; and a Means to promote the Religion he came to establish, may be made appear with the greatest Ease.

It would tend very much to evince the Truth of Christianity, when he, who was so zealous a Preacher of it, would express a Readiness to lay down his Life for it: In reference to this, Jesus Christ is said to witness before *Pontius Pilate*, a *good Confession*. If the Apostle had suffered with Courage, Resolution, and Chearfulness, it would have discover’d the Spirit of Glory to rest upon him, and have represented to Advantage, the Force and Power of the Christian Religion, whose Motives were sufficient to support him under suffering Death, with *such* Firmness of Mind, and Calm of Joy, arising from the Hope of future Glory, as would bear the nicest Remarks. Who would look on such a Saint, bravely triumphing at once over the Enemies of Christianity, and the King of Terrors, and not feel chilling Fear, and fickle Doubt, dispel and vanish, and in their room a noble and divine Ardor succeed? Who, engag’d in preaching Christ, would not find, on this Occasion, a Flame of enlighten’d Zeal kindle in his Breast, and new Resolution and Courage, to continue
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A Funeral SERMON

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firm and stedfast, hereby imparted to his Mind ? By these Reflections, you see, the Death of the Apostle, was capable of being a Gain to the Interest of Christ, and an Advantage to the Doctrine of Christianity. In which Sense we must understand the Words, if we consider them connected with the preceding.

But if we refer them to the following Verses, they may admit a different Meaning : *If I live in the Flesh, this is the Fruit of my Labour ; yet what I shall chuse, I wot not : for I am in a Strait betwixt Two, having a Desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better : Nevertheless, to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you.* The Apostle appears in a Difficulty how to make his Choice : *If I live in the Flesh, I shall be for your Furtherance and Joy of Faith, and this Fruit of my Labour is desirable for me to live to Christ. If I depart, I shall be with Christ ; consequently, to dye will be* *Mat. v. 11.* *to me the highest Gain ; receiving the peculiar Reward of a Martyr for the Christian Religion. Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my sake : Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad ; for GREAT is your Reward in Heaven.* Under what Views Death will prove Gain to every sincere Christian, will be proper here to enquire.

1. Inasmuch as Death will remove all the Evils which unavoidably attend this imperfect Life. And,
2. Instate us in the Possession of those Joys, which are, at present, beyond our Capacity fully to comprehend.

1. Inasmuch as Death will remove all the Evils which unavoidably attend this imperfect Life. The Absence of what is uneasy to us, will come under the Character of Good, and be esteem'd, by just Estimate, *proper Gain*.

§. 1. Death will put an End to all the Sorrows and Afflictions, to which the sincere Christian is peculiarly, or in common with others, expos'd. *Man is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards.* Job v. 7. The true Christian is incident in common to Mankind, to Pains and Sickneses, to Losses and Disappointments, to the Removal and Decease of nearest Relations and dearest Friends; and the Design of the Christian Religion is not to render us insensible to the Impressions of Grief, but to allay and moderate them. He is, besides, often expos'd to peculiar Opposition and Reproach, as he is a *faithful Follower of Christ*. For, *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution.* 2 Tim. iii. 12. To all these Trials Death will put an eternal Period. In the Grave, *the Wicked cease from troubling, and the Weary*

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*are at rest ; Tears will be for ever wip'd away ;
and the Voice of Mourning will be no more
heard.*

§. 2. Death will happily put an End to the Remains of Sin and Imperfection, which attend, in this Life, the most improved Christian. The Entrance of Sin into the World, has occasion'd strange Disorders in the Human Frame : The Appetites are strong and heady, the Passions are violent and unruly, and the Ply and Bias lies strongly towards Things of Sense. A slender Reflection on what we experience in our selves, and remark in others, will give us full Conviction of the Depravity of Human Nature. God continues to us some Principles for Recovery, and by the Revelation of the Gospel, takes the most effectual Method to accomplish it. The true Believer, by the *Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, is made free from the Law of Sin and Death* ; dislikes every Sin, and is reconcil'd to the Divine Nature and Will : Finds ardent Desires to resemble God, and attain Conformity to his Holiness in higher measures. When he feels the Remainders of Sin hang heavy about him, as a dead Weight, and hinder him in his Christian Race, he breathes out melancholy Complaints ; *O wretched Man that I am ! who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death ?* The King of Terrors, by whose Hand alone it is he expects perfect Freedom, now loses much of his Horror, and appears to his View in

Rom. viii.
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State arise, when the Compass of Knowledge is so clear and large, and the Impress of the Divine Image so perfect and complete. To conclude, When there shall be a Consummation of the Happiness of Believers in the Resurrection of the Body; when *this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal shall put on Immortality*, encircled with Glory, resembling the Redeemer; when perfected in Mind and Body, they shall enter into the Presence-Chamber of Glory, and be where Christ is, and mingle with the pleasing Society of Angels and glorify'd Saints; what Acclamations of Joy, what Triumphs of Pleasure, what Transports of Delight must fill those Blessed Realms, *where there is Fullness of Joy and Pleasures for evermore!*

Upon the whole, If to exchange a miserable, tempted, and imperfect Life, for a happy, secure, and perfect one, be esteem'd advantageous, then, from what has been offer'd, it will be undeniably evident, That Death to the faithful Servants of our Lord, must be true and real Gain. I come now to the Third General Head.

III. *The Suitableness of the Words to the present melancholy Occasion, viz. The Removal of an ancient Member of this Church, whose Request is the Reason of my fixing upon them.*

This will make it necessary to give his Character, and *the Memory of the Just is blessed.*

He had an early Turn to Religion. His Mother dying when he was about Twelve Years of Age, he express'd an extraordinary and uncommon Sorrow; and his Father, to allay and direct his Grief, tells him, *Worldly Sorrow worketh Death; but Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of:* Which, by the Blessing

sing of God, prov'd a happy Occasion to give a right Turn to his Thoughts ; and attending Mr. *Fisher* at *Sheffield*, he had the Change to Salvation, which the Apostle speaks of, under his Ministry, according to his own Apprehension. His Temper and Complexion were naturally warm. This, when he had received a serious and religious Ply, occasioned an uncommon Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Interest of Christ. And for these great and valuable Purposes, he early devoted part of his Increase. He maintain'd ever in his Mind a lively Sense of the Evil of Sin, and arriv'd to a considerable Share of Scripture-Knowledge. He walk'd in the Ordinances of the Gospel, and in Communion with this Church above Sixty Years ; near the Period of Time which is allotted to Man in this World. His Faith was strong, steddily trusting in God, and relying on his Promises. His Patience remarkable : tho' he was so unhappy as to be blind many Years, I never heard him make the least Complaint the several Years I had been acquainted with him. He train'd up his Children in the Knowledge and Practice of Religion, and set before them an Example of Holiness ; and in particular, of Publick, Private, and Secret Devotion, which by his Instructions he recommended to them ; and was so happy as to see his pious Care successful. If he had given any an Offence, as some times it would happen thro' the Warmth of his Temper ; he would not disdain to ask Pardon, tho' of an Inferior, conscious it was the Command of his Lord. He delay'd not *doing Good* to his Death ; but during his Life cast about how he might be serviceable to his Relations, and, in a particular manner, to the Ministers of Christ, wherein he greatly abounded. His
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a more soft and milder Aspect. He could even with Death would make a quicker Approach, were it not that he is sensible, it becomes him to be entirely resigned to the Will of his Heavenly Father. On that Account, he submissively goes on in the Toil and Conflict of the Christian Warfare; *putting on the whole Armour of God*, standing resolute to his Charge, and *fighting the good Fight of Faith*; as the Apostle, *He, forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth to those Things which are before, presses toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, not as tho' he had already attained, or were already perfect.*

§. 3. Temptation, which renders now the true Christian uneasy, will cease at Death. As the sincere Believer hates Sin, and loves Righteousness, whatever offers to invite him to the former, and take him off and seduce him from the latter, fails not of giving him a sensible Concern. It is no little Pain to him to think this World, thro' which he must pass, is beset with Snares, and that there is nothing in it, but, at some time or other, may prove a Temptation to him. A thousand pleasing Objects make their insinuating Address, with too much Success; and the true Believer too often feels thereby, an Abatement given to his Vigour and Zeal in the Christian Life. The Fear and Dread of Evil, which arises sometimes from the faithful Discharge of his Duty, makes his Soul

shrink and recoil a little, to his great Uneasiness; till he rallies again, and is resolv'd, in the Divine Strength, to please God rather than Man. In a Word, he is instructed by the Christian Religion, that Eph.vi.12 he is call'd to *wrestle, not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the Rulers of this World, and against spiritual Wickednesses in High Places.* This engages him to stand ever upon his Guard, and even wish he was released, and put quite out of all Danger, and the Reach of every Temptation. But Death will farther be made appear Gain to every sincere Christian,

2. As it inflates him in Possession of the Ingredients of true and real Happiness, in a Degree which we cannot at present fully comprehend.

§. 1. The Knowledge which the true Christian shall have after Death, shall be more perfect. The Knowledge of Divine Things, which we have in this State, is by Faith, not Intuitive and Immediate, but as when we look at a remote and distant Object, attended with Confusion and Indistinctness in a great measure; gain'd by considerable Toil and Application; frequently interrupted by the necessary Avocations of Life, and of consequence, not so clear and connected, or of any great Extent and Compass. But when we dye, and enter into the World of Blessed Spirits, we emerge out of Twilight and glimmering Views,

Views, into full and strong Light, which our Understandings will be exalted and strengthened to bear. *Now we see thro' a Glass darkly, in a* ^{1 Cor. xiii.} *Riddle, with great Obscurity; but then Face to* ^{12.} *Face, with the greatest Nearness and Perspicuity. Now we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known. We know in part, and prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away.* The Apostle carries his Thought a great way in the 11th Verse; *When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away Childish Things.* There will be as much Difference between the Views we shall have in the other World, and those we gain in this, as there is now in the Sentiments of Childhood, and those which we entertain in a mature and manly Age. The Knowledge we shall then arrive to, will be easie and clear; which is represented, by *seeing Face to Face.* A great Variety of Divine Truths shall shine in full Light, and be taken in by the Mind at one View, with great Facility, and the utmost Clearness; which will render the Understanding capable of carrying on the Pursuit in a long Train of strong and well-conducted Reasonings: For discursive Knowledge will enter into the unseen State. Who now can fully conceive the vast Extent of View, and Reach of Thought, that from hence will result in the State of perfect Light! How far the Glories of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Wonders of Creation, Mazes of Providence, and Depths of Grace in the Recovery of fallen Man, will then be discover'd, who in this imperfect Life can comprehend? What new Scenes will open, who can describe? What Employments such refin'd Minds shall be engag'd in, who can determine? The Angels are now ministering Spirits to us.

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§. 2. The Holiness which a true Believer attains on Death, is perfect.

In this Life the sincere Christian carries about him a Body of Sin. True it is, Sin has not Dominion over him ; but there are unhappy Remains of moral Imperfection, which in this State will ever attend him. He sees indeed the Beauties of Holiness, and constantly presses after higher Attainments of it. He ardently desires perfect Freedom from Sin, and complete Purity ; but despairs at the Time he presses forward, of arriving to it, till he ceases out of this Life ; and then the uncas'd Mind drops with the Body, every Sin which here entangled him, and every Weight which in this State hindred him in the Divine Life, and commences perfectly free, and completely pure. The Ply and Bent to Holiness, which in this State of Tryal was prevailing, is now by the glorious and transforming Views he is introduced into, invariably fix'd and for ever settled.

§. 3. The Satisfaction which a true Christian enjoys after Death, is answerable to his Perfection in Knowledge and Purity. And, I may well say, answerable to his perfect Knowledge and Holiness, since it naturally arises from *them*. What Raptures of Joy must a Mind feel, when, rescu'd from uneasy Shackles, and freed from a darksome Prison, it finds it self refin'd, and entertain'd with near and comprehensive Views of Divine and Heavenly Glories ! The little Knowledge we are capable of gaining in this State, affords higher Relishes of Pleasure, than this sensible Scene can furnish to us ; and the imperfect Resemblance of God we here attain, fails not of being attended with true Delight and solid Satisfaction. How inconceivably high then, must the unmingled Pleasures of the other

Charity was not confin'd to a Party, though it might extend more to those who were of his own Persuasion, being sincere, and thinking himself in the Right. He deny'd himself, and liv'd frugal, that he might more extensively express his Goodness. Various Methods he took to be publickly useful; distributing Books proper to encourage Religion and Vertue; promoting Schools for Instruction of the Poor to read and write; and contributing to the Building of Places of Worship. He erected and founded two Churches at *Rotheram* and *Doncaster*; and establish'd Schools at each Place for teaching Youth; not only communicating in his Life to their Maintenance, but bequeathing some Encouragement after his Decease. He freely contributed to the Building a Place at *Sheffield*; and when that proved too little, he liberally imparted to the building a larger; and purchasing the less, converted it into an Alms-House, wherein Sixteen poor Persons dwell; to which he hath left a small Endowment. He was so happy as to live many Years in full Assurance, form'd on Scripture Grounds (for he used to say, Faith and Repentance were the Work of a Christian every Day) and founded on the Merits and Intercession of Jesus Christ, of an endless State of Rest and Happiness. And tho' thro' great Age, he at last declin'd, the Images and Ideas which the Scripture furnish'd him with, were the last that were effac'd in him. When he was in his dying Agonies, which were stronger than usual at those advanced Years, he was ask'd, Whether he desir'd to be with Christ? and he answer'd, with an uncommon Strength of Voice, *Yes! Yes!* Thus he liv'd to Christ; and we have no Reason to doubt, but Death proves to him Gain.

IV. *Let us make Application of this Argument.*

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§. 1. From the Words in their Contexture, we may infer, That the Soul at Death does not fall into a State of Insensibility, till the Resurrection. This Opinion, which has been entertain'd by some, is clearly refuted by the Apostle's Desire, rather *to be absent from the Body*, and to be present with the Lord. The Apostle is in a Strait, and at a Loss which to choose, whether to depart and be with Christ, or *abide in the Flesh* for the Furtherance of the Gospel: But upon the Supposition, that the Soul sinks into an insensible State, there appears not the least Difficulty of making the Choice. For who, at least of the Genius of the Apostle, would not prefer an active Service, attended at present with inward Satisfaction; and the joyful Expectation of having in proportion a brighter Crown of Glory, to the stupid Rest of a State perfectly insensible? Who would imagine, the Apostle means, by being with Christ after his Departure, a profound Sleep, and a State entirely destitute of all Sense?

§. 2. If Death is Gain to true Believers, this may moderate our Grief, when such are removed out of our World. To sorrow in an excessive manner for their Departure, carries in it an unaccountable Narrowness, that we would have them continued to us at their great Loss and Disadvantage. We readily own, when they are absent from the Body, they are present with Christ, in a State of unallay'd Happiness; and yet, out of a strange Affection to 'em, we would have their Felicity (tho' it was the Scope of their Lives, and we profess it to be ours, to prepare for it) delay'd, to gratify our fond Humour. Strange and inconsistent Love! A few Tears indeed may become the Decease of a valuable Friend and dear Relative, and reasonably be regarded as a Debt we owe to natural Affection.

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§. 3. If Death is so great an Advantage to a true Christian, then this vindicates the Conduct of a Believer, in his Readiness to undergo all Difficulties for the sake of Christ and his Religion.

It is with great Reason the sincere Follower of Christ constantly reins his Appetites, steddily manages his Passions, willingly denies himself, foregoing the greatest Interest and Honour, quitting the dearest Enjoyment and most valuable Blessing of Life, and sacrificing Life it self, when his Lord commands. He has his Eye fix'd on the Recompence of Reward, and looks to an eternal Weight of Glory. He knows, that all he can lose in this World is inconsiderable, in Comparison with the solid and lasting Happiness which is promis'd in the other. He is fully persuaded, it will not be in vain to serve the Lord, and therefore abounds in *his* Work, expecting from free and unmerited Goodness, according to the Divine Promise, an answerable and proportionate Reward.

§. 4. This Consideration should make Death appear

A Funeral SERMON

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§. 5. and *Lastly*, Let me recommend to you a Care *to live to Christ*, in an even and constant manner. This is the only way to have Death prove Gain to us, and be reconcil'd to it. What it is *to live to Christ*, and proper Arguments to enforce it, have been already offer'd. To which I shall add, This is the noblest End we can propose to our selves. To live *only* that we may indulge our selves in sensual Pleasures, or amass great Riches, or arrive to considerable Honour among Mortals: is unworthy an intelligent Being, form'd for God, and design'd to future Happiness. How much more valuable is it *to live to Christ*, who was sent by the Father, to refine and raise us to our true Perfection and proper Happiness; and thereby promote the Honour of God, the Glory of Christ, the real Felicity of others, and our own eternal Welfare. Can there be any Views we can form equal to these? Let us therefore resolve, in Dependence on Divine Strength, to live to Christ in an even and a steady way, without considerable Breaks and Interruptions: Then shall we have inward Peace; Calmness of Mind in all the Tempests of this Life; Supports in Death, and a triumphant Entrance into an endless State of Immortality and Happiness.

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